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# OLD SETTLERS REUNION

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# OLD SETTLERS' REUNION.

## The Pioneers Picnic at Cherry Bluff.

Excursion Trains from Muscatine and West Liberty—A Large Gathering and a Pleasant Time.

AUGUST 31, 1887.

The last day of August proved a clear and pleasant day for the Reunion of the Muscatine county Old Settlers at Cherry Bluff, near Moscow. At 9 o'clock a train of three coaches, two of them specially devoted to the excursionists, left Muscatine for the Bluffs. Over 100 excursionists boarded the cars here and they were joined by a number of the citizens of Wilton, from which a greater number would have gone but for the pall that had fallen upon the place by the death of Mr. Morgridge. At Wilton the excursion cars were attached to the Atlantic express train and after a brief run they were side-tracked at Cherry Bluff. The grounds, which belong to the railroad, are enclosed and have been fitted up with every convenience for picnic parties. They comprise about 40 acres, the elevated ground seeming to be a sort of promontory, well shaded, much of the timber being cherry, hence the name of "Cherry Bluffs." Tables and seats with a stand for public speaking are permanent fixture of the grounds; also, a place for playing croquet. The railroad company deserves credit for what it has done in this respect for the public accommodation, and it is also deserving of thanks for the excellent accommodations it provided for our party by furnishing ample car accommodations and running an extra from Wilton to bring them home in seasonable time.

There was some complaint, however, by farmers who had driven to the grounds and were denied admission with their teams unless 20 cents was paid for each one.

When the Muscatine excursion party arrived at the Bluffs, they found a large number of persons already assembled. The West Liberty and Atalissa delegations had arrived and many others who had come from their homes with private conveyances. A road winding up the hill through the thick foliage led to the place where the picnic dinner was to be served. Dinner was partaken of about noon.

After dinner President Walton rapped for order and the regular exercises were opened with an appropriate prayer by Judge D. C. Richman.

Reports were then called for from two committees previously appointed, the one by Joseph Bridgman on the death of John Semple and the other by G. B. Denison on the death of Mrs. Michael Green.

Mr. Bridgman submitted the following report:

### *Mr. President and Old Settlers:*

In the death of Mr. John Semple one of the old land marks has passed away, for no one was seen oftener during business hours upon our streets than Mr. Semple. Ever faithful to the trusts confided in him by his employers; no temptations for gain could swerve him from the path of rectitude and duty. Dishonesty had no place in his vocabulary. Truthful and honest in all his dealings, whether for himself or his employers; esteemed most by those who knew him best, somewhat reticent; not inclined to be too confiding to all but where he once placed his friendship, he was true as steel and reliable as truth itself. In short, John Semple was an honest man, and those of us who were in the habit of meeting him in the daily walks of life will miss him as few are missed. His devotion as a faithful husband and father are worthy of all praises and emulation, and we as old settlers and citizens tender to the afflicted family our warmest sympathy in this their great sorrow and affliction.



Mr. Denison reported as follows:

Died, at Muscatine, July 14, 1887, of old age, Mrs. Elizabeth Green, aged 94 years, 4 months and 3 days. Mrs. Green was born in Maryland; came to Iowa in 1840; had lived continuously in Muscatine 46 years. Like most of the early settlers she experienced much of the rough and tumble of pioneer life. She was an exemplary Christian, a good neighbor and commanded the respect of all who knew her. Therefore,

*Resolved*, By the Old Settlers, at their 31st annual reunion, held at Cherry Bluffs, Aug. 3, 1887, that this tribute of respect to our sister be entered upon the minutes of their proceedings.

Mr. Walton, the President, then read a paper as follows:

OLD SETTLERS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

We have met to hold another reunion in what is now called an old settled county. It is wonderful how fast time flies! There are persons living, and possibly some on the grounds, that were living when the first known local history of this country was written. In 1806 the United States government sent Major Z. M. Pike on an exploration up the Mississippi river. On page 8 of his report is the following:

"August 25th, Sunday—passed the Iowa river; encamped at night on a prairie marked Grant's Prairie. August 26th, Monday—towed our boat nine miles to where the river hills join the Mississippi."

His encampment was probably just above the head of the "Big Timber," in Louisa county. Grant Prairie seems to have been a name he gave to the Muscatine Island. Where "the hills join the Mississippi" is where the city of Muscatine is now located. For 30 years little or no local history was written. This locality was known by the river men as Grind Stone Bluff. During this 30 years the Indian had undisputed possession, as he had for ages before. In 1836 the white settlers came in such numbers as to effectually rout him. In talking with an old settler, John Holliday, who came to this county on May 8th, 1836, I learned that there were but two trading houses standing where Muscatine city is now. These were owned by John Vannatta and James Casey. The former stood near the mouth of Pappoose creek; the other near Hershey's large mill.

Improvements soon commenced. The lands were surveyed, claims taken, towns and cities were laid out, and this now old settled county had made a beginning. Within the past 50 years,

the appearance of our county has very much changed. Along the rivers and hills we had large timber, with but little undergrowth of brush. In the bottoms and on the islands some of the burr oak trees grew to an immense size. I recollect one that stood near the middle of Geneva Island that measured 6½ feet in diameter. Another stood across the Mississippi river just above the mouth of Copper creek that measured 22 feet in circumference, 3 feet above the ground. Both of these trees were sound to the heart. The latter tree was cut down for a single "coon," worth at the time but 25 cents.

Our prairies were immense wastes of grass. We used to think, would they ever be good for anything? Occasionally near a slough or a pond a single tree could be seen. It was always known as the "Lone Tree," and served as a land-mark for many a weary traveler. There was one of these trees on the Muscatine Island and another near the town of Lone Tree in Johnson county.

The wild grass grew to a great height. On the Muscatine Island, near where Olive Branch school house now stands, and from there to the head of the Island, it grew from 6 to 8 feet high. In hunting cattle in this grass, I frequently had to stand on my horse to see over the top.

In those early days there were many things that were laughable and romantic.

For ten years after the first settlement of our county unmarried ladies were very scarce. Almost any marriageable woman, it mattered little how comely, could receive desirable proposals. I think a majority of the young ladies married before they were 16 years old. The first wedding I attended was in the winter of 1839-40. The bride was just past 14, the groom some 10 years older. I can call to mind six or eight such young marriages that occurred in our county in two or three of those early years. \* \* \*

As a fact we actually had no old maids, and but few widows; not that men did not die; our mortality list among the men was equal to any locality in the United States. But like an army in action when one man died another was ready to take his place.

Mr. P Jackson was introduced. After expressing his pleasure at seeing

so many countenances he recollected but some of whose names he could not recall, he read the following paper:

In July, 1838, I first visited Muscatine, then Bloomington. The boys had just burned down the original trading post, which stood on the bank of the river where the passenger depot now is, for a 4th of July bonfire.

The great object of interest at that time was a canal from Moscow to Muscatine connecting the Cedar with the Mississippi, thus creating the most wonderful water-power that was ever heard of, in connection with which Muscatine on the great western bend of the Mississippi river was sure to be the Cincinnati of the west. So I bought a lot for which I paid \$100 and only, got a receipt same as for personal property, no one as yet having any legal title to real estate.

I staid over Sunday and heard George Bumgardner preach in Mother Reece's dining room in a frame building on what was at that time rather elevated ground in block 5, then known as "Kasey's Landing." The ground has since slid toward the river, taking the house with it. Next time I attended meeting was in a log cabin on Front street in block 11. We had the presiding elder from St. Louis and had quarterly meeting afterwards. We had meeting in the second story of an unfinished frame on lot 1, block 12; then in a log cabin, where the *Tribune* office is now. Here Mrs. Dana and Charles A. Wartfield had the finest singing we ever had in Muscatine. Then in a log cabin where Judge Brannan now resides, where I have heard Bro. Brace preach with his coat buttoned, his hands in his pockets, shaking so with the ague that he could not hold his hymn book. To the best of my recollection these were all Methodist meetings.

When the educational society built their house on the lot near where the *JOURNAL* office is now located, the Methodists and Presbyterians occupied it jointly, each alternate Sabbath; but Bro. Jewitt was not satisfied with this arrangement and declared the Methodist should have a house of their own, if it was only ten feet square. S. C. Hastings joined the M. E. church about that time and arranged matters so the academy building became the property of the M. E. Church—the Presbyterians occupying the lower story of a building in the rear of where

the Episcopal church now is, afterwards building on the Public Square and finally on the Avenue.

The Congregationalists built their first church on top of the hill—now dug away—in block 56, near where Mrs. Hawley resides; afterwards on Third street, on lot 6 block 35, where the grade was so much lowered the church had to be taken down and built on the alley end of same lot, as at present.

The academy building getting too small for the Methodists they next built the present city hall building and finally the church they now occupy on the Avenue.

Our courts of that period were about as migratory as the churches. The first I recollect of was held in the same two-story frame on front street in which was preaching on Sunday. The criminal code was rather short in those early days and there was pretty large personal liberty, claim jumpers and horse thieves being about the only criminals obnoxious to the community, and the officials rather easy with criminals of most kinds. Our first sheriff was a very easy-going man, and I have seen the judge, after court was dismissed, chasing persons round the stumps, helping the sheriff to re-arrest parties that he had turned over to him during the day. But the court house and jail were among our first buildings and our courts settled down to regular work.

The best thing I recollect of early times was the uniformity of our status as citizens. We were all on a par; no one had more than the bare necessities of life; no one could put on any style to excite the envy of a neighbor—perfectly free and independent, and every one as good as another.

The stores did not keep only the plainest of goods and not very much of that. In March, 1839, when the river opened, there was not a yard of calico, a yard of muslin or a pound of salt for sale.

The arrival of the first boat those days was an event of great interest and called the whole population to the landing, from whence goods were taken and very quickly opened while customers stood around eager for some coffee, flour or bacon—especially quinine.

We had absolutely nothing to eat or wear only what we got from St. Louis—except clapboards and puncheons and split oak shingles.



I recollect the first pork packed was put up by Mr. Ogilvie and myself in the winter of '40-41, when we packed about 250 hogs, paying \$3 to \$3 50 per hundred pounds dressed. We made it all into bacon and it took us two years to retail it out.

That same spring of '41 Mr. Ogilvie and myself built the first open front store in Muscatine, Jo Hoops being the architect.

Our very earliest merchants after the Indian traders as I recollect were: Ogilvie & Abbott, Howland & Brady, H. Q. Jennison, H. Musgrove, John W. Richman, Joseph Bennett, Harvey Gellitt, J. A. Parvin, A. Ogilvie & Co. (Peter Jackson being the company part of the firm) John Zeigler and several others came along pretty soon as the population increased.

In those days very little money passed; every thing was barter or store pay; real estate of comparatively no value, only as an actual settler came among us and bought a lot to occupy. The first real increase in the trade and business of our city was along about '43, 4 and 5, when the Overmans and Timberlakes, the Lewises and Hendersons, the Pickerings and Fletchers and others filled up the country between the Cedar and Wapsinonoc, the Schencks and Smiths taking all beyond. W. A. Clark and some others were large early settlers on the Wapsinonoc long before any boom came.

The first real boom that I recollect of as giving to real estate in the city some money value as an article of buying and selling was along about 1850, when the Neidigs and Hersheys and other Marylanders and Pennsylvanians came among us, considerably increasing our numbers and making town lots really available to the owners.

The location and settlement of Iowa City added very much to our trade, Muscatine being the point of landing for all supplies for the counties of Johnson, Cedar, Linn and Jones and largely for Louisa and Washington and in a north-west direction as far as Fort Dodge. All the natural roads came to Muscatine, so much so that settlers in Jones county had to come to Muscatine to get to Davenport or Rock Island by the river.

In 1852 the era of substantial building took quite a boom. That year Jacob Butler built his residence on the hill. J. A. Reuling built his brick,

corner of Chestnut and Second. Peter Jackson built the first three-story brick on Front street.

Dr. Reeder, Green & Stone and many others built substantial buildings, giving the first regular employment to a very great number of journeymen mechanics, and this was about the commencement of money circulating freely and plentifully, and everything grew marvelously.

Union Block was not built until 1854; that was, I think, about the first high price—fifty dollars a foot—paid for lots and the largest building up to that time, and it took a syndicate of Lyman C. Hine, Geo. C. Stone, Peter Jackson, Henry Funk and John Lemp to accomplish it, but everything was booming—a constant stream of teams and immigrants from all directions—everything full and overrun—buffalo robes in demand for beds, and any kind of a board building for a warehouse—continuing so until the panic of 1857 paralyzed all improvements and business.

Along about the '70's the lumber trade began to attain considerable importance in this locality. Messrs. Hershey and Chambers Bros. had been manufacturing for a number of years—the Messrs. Mussers building their mill in 1871. The lumber business all round rapidly increased and has of late years been the main source of the prosperity of our city—in connection with wood-working interests—the door, sash and blind plant of the Huttig Manufacturing Company and the Muscatine Manufacturing Company in the same line being unsurpassed in quantity and quality by anything in the West.

But, hark! I think I hear the not far-distant boom of the Atchison & Santa Fe R. R. approaching, and I would rather stop and listen so we may more distinctly and surely hear the very desirable indications of its arrival—and it may be the St. Paul or North Western let them come. We will give them all a hearty welcome.

Asa Gregg, the oldest settler of the county on the grounds, was introduced and gave some interesting incidents of pioneer life. He settled on the Wapsie in the spring of 1837, accompanied by his wife, who was also present at this reunion. He described the country when he first saw it as wild but beautiful.

S. W. Stewart, of Wilton, who located at Moscow in 1838, was called out and made a brief speech, full of originality and abounding in happy hits.

Judge J. Scott Richman was called on by the President to speak of the lawyers of pioneer days. This he did in a very interesting way, mentioning with their characteristics Judge Williams, W. G. Woodward, Stephen, Whicher, S. C. Hastings and Ralph P. Lowe. These with the speaker were in the habit of traveling over the district with the Judge (Williams) wherever he went to hold court, their trips being as far distant as Linn county and requiring five or six weeks each. From the description thus given, the Judge and the bar were a jolly set of men, making fun and sport wherever they went, especially at their place of lodging in the evening. When so assembled, each one was required to sing a song or tell a story. Judge Williams could sing and play the flute or fiddle, but some of the lawyers could neither sing or play. He referred to Hastings as one of the latter, who, he said, "couldn't twist a corner of Old Hundred with a monkey wrench."

Further speeches were made by John Mahin, A. Heberling, Ben. Matthews, J. B. Henneker and Joseph Bridgman, when these exercises were closed.

The old officers of the Society were re-elected, except that John Barnard was chosen to fill the vacancy caused by the death of John A. Parvin. The officers for the ensuing year are as follows:

President—J. P. Walton.

Vice President—John Barnard.

Secretary—P. Jackson.

Treasurer—Mrs. P. Jackson

The following is a list of participants in the reunion living in the county east of the Cedar river, as near as our reporter could obtain them:

John W. Anderson and wife.  
Mrs. J. C. Abbott.

Joseph Bridgman.  
J. A. Bishop, wife and daughter.  
Henry Blanchard.  
John Barnard and wife.  
Eden Brown.  
Ed. Barnard and wife.  
Charles Chaplin and wife.  
G. W. Coverston and family.  
J. Covell and family.  
Mrs. Carey.  
John Dunn.  
Mrs. J. B. Dougherty and daughter.  
W. A. Drury.  
G. B. Denison and wife.  
Mrs. W. L. Davidson.  
Mrs. Kimmel Dunn.  
Mrs. S. C. Dunn.  
Ed. Denton and wife.  
Isaiah Davis and wife.  
B. H. Eversmeyer and wife.  
Mrs. Suel Foster.  
Mrs. T. R. Fitzgerald.  
Wm. Fultz.  
Joshua Fishburn.  
Frank Geiger.  
Fred. Geisler and wife.  
Mrs. Greeley.  
J. Greiner and family.  
A. Hopkinson and wife.  
Mrs. Hanna.  
H. A. Hollister and wife.  
Dr. Mary Hollister.  
Dr. Hardman and wife.  
J. C. Hitchcock and wife.  
Mrs. Mary C. Hacker and son.  
J. Linn Hoopes and wife.  
J. B. Henniker.  
W. H. Hazlett and wife.  
Wm. Hoskins and wife.  
A. L. Healey.  
Peter Jackson, wife and daughter.  
Alex Jackson and wife.  
Mrs. James Jackson and daughter.  
Dr. D. P. Johnson.  
Miss Maggie James.  
J. W. Jamison.  
G. W. Keckler.  
John Keichman and family.  
Mrs. J. G. H. Little.  
Mrs. Lewis and son.  
J. P. Lewis and wife.  
E. B. Lewis and wife.  
Daniel Lake.  
Wm. Lewis.  
John Mahin, wife and two children.  
Richard Musser.  
Ben Matthews.  
Mrs. G. D. Magoon.  
Mrs. P. Musser and daughter.  
D. G. McCloud and family.  
S. McNutt and wife.  
J. McCroskey and wife.  
J. Neidig.  
Mrs. Nye.  
Wm. Parkins.  
P. Pace, wife and grandchild.  
R. Porter.  
Geo. Parks.  
Judge J. S. Richman.  
Mrs. Reynolds.  
Judge D. C. Richman.  
J. W. Rice and family.  
A. Romig.  
A. Smalley, wife and daughter.  
Samuel Sinnett and family.  
Mrs. Sherfe.  
Philip Stein, wife and daughter.  
Geo. M. Scott and wife.  
Albert Sherwood and wife.  
Geo. Shields and wife.  
Wm. Shields and wife.  
S. W. Stewart.  
Geo. Satterthwaite.  
Andrew Sreeley.  
Mrs. J. J. Schafuit.  
John Tomney.  
Miss Allie Varner.  
A. M. Winn and wife.

Mrs. C. Weed.  
 John Winn, wife and daughter.  
 John A. Will and family.  
 C. P. Woods.  
 J. D. Walker.  
 Henry Will and family.  
 Josiah P. Walton and wife.  
 H. M. Wallace and wife.

Subjoined is a list of those living west of the Cedar, as obtained by another reporter:

A. Fulton, West Liberty.  
 Jont Maxson, West Liberty.  
 George Shipman, West Liberty.  
 E. Stratton, West Liberty.  
 T. Manby, West Liberty.  
 Isaac Gatton, West Liberty.  
 Louis Bowlsby, West Liberty.  
 Jack Bowlsby, West Liberty.  
 Ira Baker, West Liberty.  
 John Smith, West Liberty.  
 Charles Barnes, West Liberty.  
 E. Fenstermaker, West Liberty.  
 Josiah Parvin, West Liberty.  
 Mrs. A. Hendrixson, West Liberty.  
 Asa Gregg, West Liberty.  
 A. Floyde, West Liberty.  
 Moses Shellhammer, West Liberty.  
 Samuel Brand, West Liberty.  
 D. Foster, West Liberty.  
 Lot Parker, West Liberty.  
 Ira Thompson, West Liberty.  
 Harmon Timberlake, West Liberty.  
 Henry Null, West Liberty.  
 Solomon Phillips, West Liberty.  
 George Wooley, West Liberty.  
 Mr. Scott, West Liberty.  
 George Chase, West Liberty.  
 Charles Wright, West Liberty.  
 Thomas Gladstone, Atalissa.  
 George Wilkenson, Atalissa.  
 S. V. Lambert, Atalissa.  
 James Ady, Atalissa.  
 W. G. Holmes, Atalissa.  
 Robert Armstrong, Atalissa.  
 Hanson Watters, Atalissa.  
 Fred Epping, Atalissa.  
 Charles Schulte, Atalissa.  
 J. A. Jolly, Atalissa.  
 W. P. Barkalow, Atalissa.  
 Gus Murtick, Atalissa.  
 Charles Buckman, Atalissa.  
 P. Buckman, Atalissa.  
 Samuel Croxon, Atalissa.  
 James Stucker, Atalissa.  
 Henry Creese, Atalissa.  
 Ben Smith, Atalissa.  
 J. E. Parker, Atalissa.  
 Mrs. Watts, Atalissa.  
 Henry Snyder, Atalissa.  
 A. Heberling, Atalissa.  
 Edwin Brooker, Atalissa.  
 Jacob Long, Atalissa.  
 Alex Moore, Atalissa.  
 John Gatton, Atalissa.  
 Wm. J. Miller, Atalissa.  
 Nate Gatton, Atalissa.  
 Jasper Sterns, Atalissa.  
 Cyrus Overman, Atalissa.  
 Dr. Rowe, Atalissa.  
 George Worrall, Atalissa.  
 Asa Bowie, Atalissa.  
 John McIntosh, Atalissa.  
 E. E. Brokaw, Atalissa.  
 Newton Watkins, Atalissa.  
 Mrs. Lundy, Atalissa.  
 Mrs. W. B. Stucker, Atalissa.  
 Benjamin Barkalow, Atalissa.  
 Joe Matt, Atalissa.  
 John McLaughlin, Atalissa.  
 John McAninch, Atalissa.  
 Mrs. Levi Lundy, Atalissa.  
 Mrs. N. Barkalow, Atalissa.  
 Frank Stucker, Atalissa.  
 R. W. Stucker, Atalissa.  
 John W. Miller, Atalissa.

J. M. Snyder, Atalissa.  
 Henry Mellick, Atalissa.  
 Mrs. M. F. Mellick, Atalissa.

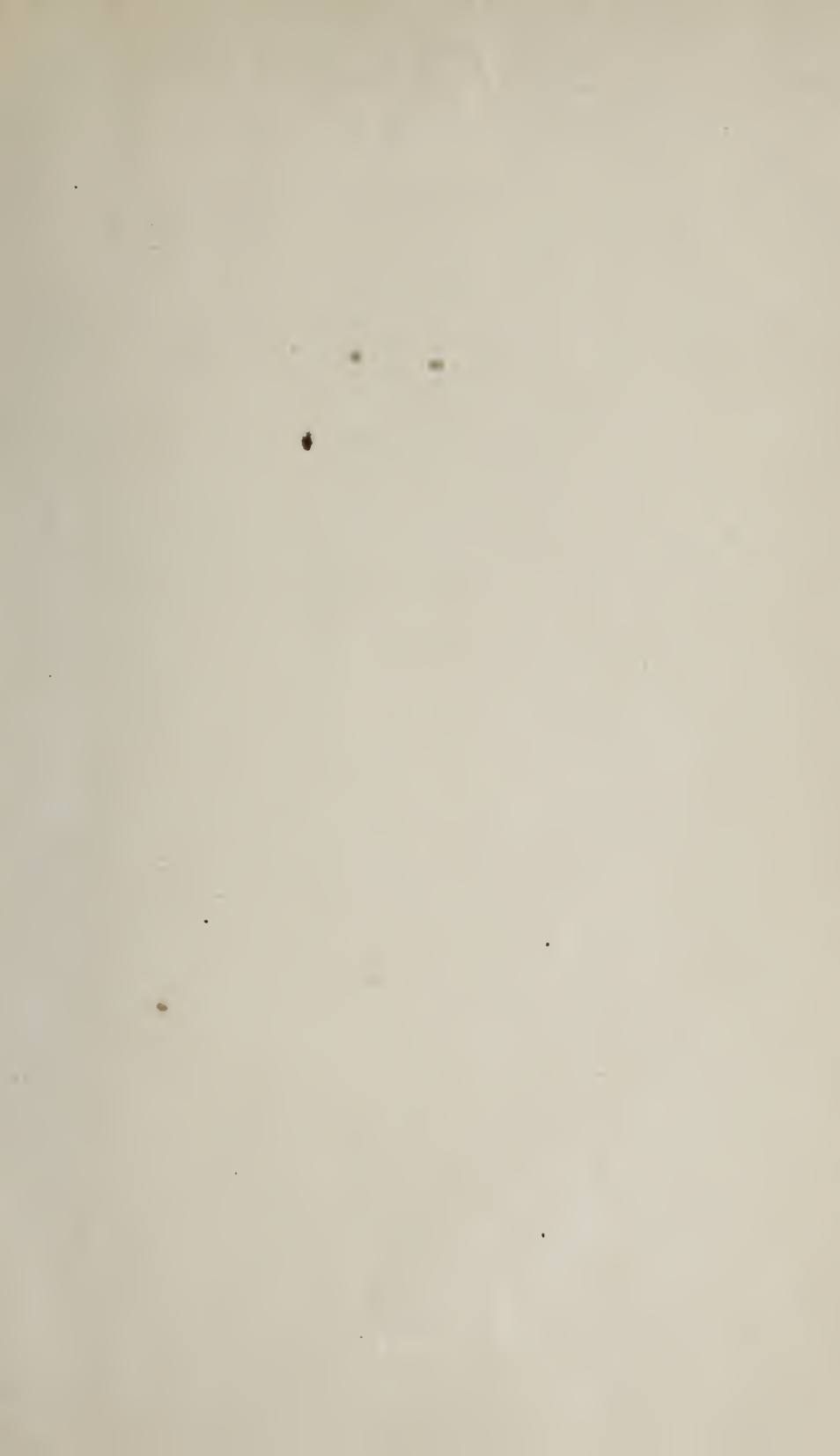
Most of the above named had their families with them. The Atalissa party numbered about 175 and the West Liberty party about eighty.

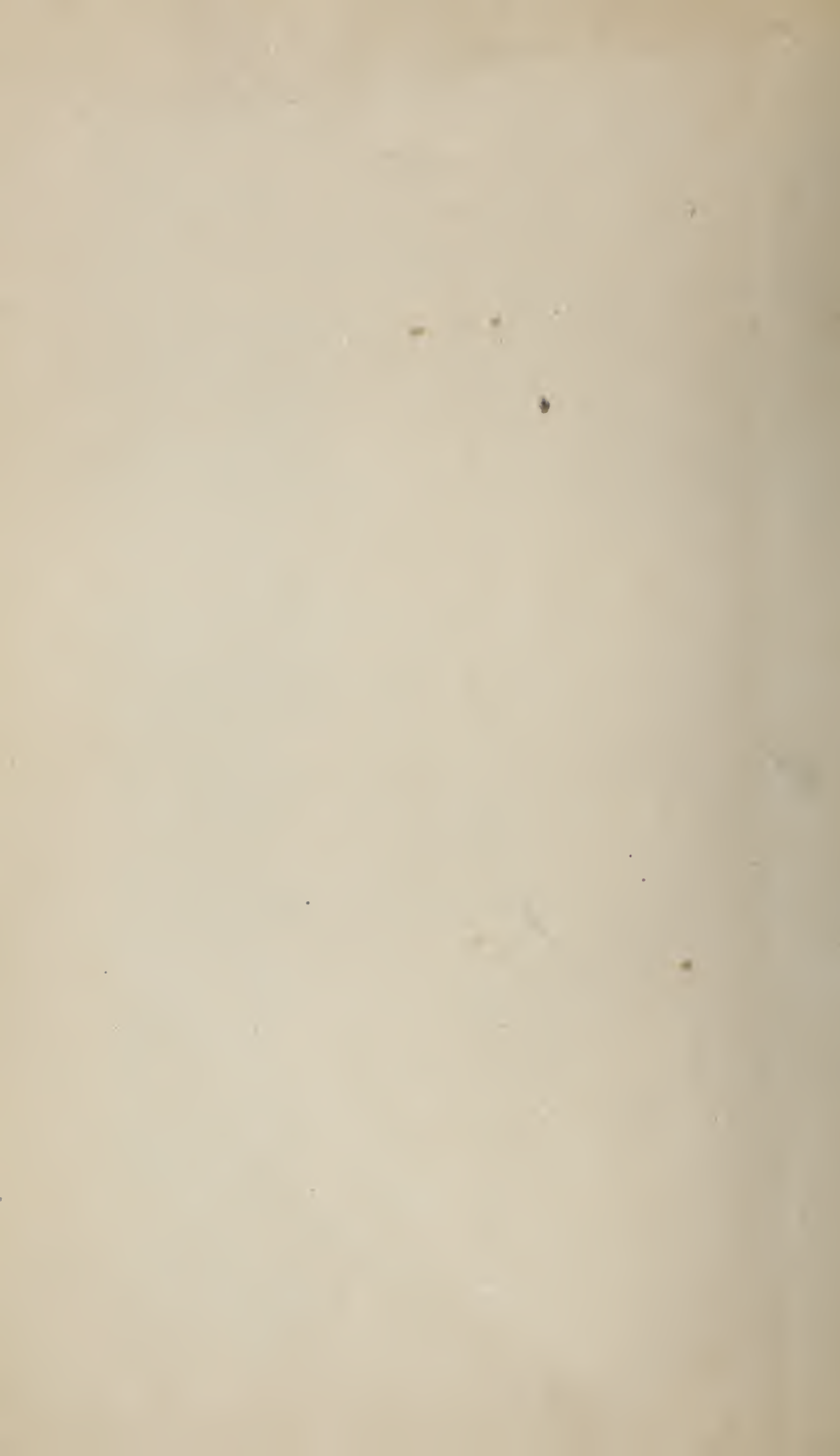
#### NOTES.

The number of persons on the picnic grounds was variously estimated at from 300 to 400.

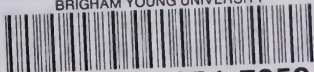
Although Asa Gregg was the oldest resident of the county on the grounds, having been in the county over fifty years, yet "Chill" Drury out-dated him as a resident of this place and vicinity, he having located in Mercer county, Ill., (just across the river,) in 1834.







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